

d. Offering support and encouragement to college students and faculty members as well as the human rights groups (including Students for Justice in Palestine, Jewish Voice for Peace, American Muslims for Palestine, and many other allied groups), whose freedom to speak, witness and advocate on university campuses is threatened in any way by state or local governments, or by college administrators.

e. Advocating for the cessation of U.S. military aid to Israel until such time that Palestinian human rights, civil rights, and self-determination are fully realized and protected in compliance with international law, US laws on foreign military assistance, and the principles of human rights.

f. Supporting the full restoration of US funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency which carries out critical services by and for Palestinian refugees, and encouraging continued support for UCC partners which serve Palestinian refugees.

g. Demanding that the plight of Palestinian refugees be addressed by Israel and the international community based on United Nations Resolution 194 guaranteeing that “refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible.”

**FUNDING:** The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

## **7. A RESOLUTION TO BAN THE PRACTICE OF CONVERSION THERAPY**

This Resolution was submitted by the Open and Affirming Coalition and Mental Health Network. Moderator Lowes introduced Crystal Silva McCormick (South Central Conference) and Crystal Silva McCormick indicated the changes that were made in the resolution. The resolution to Ban the Practice of Conversion Therapy, as amended was moved by Jamie Lee Sprague Ballou (Southern California-Nevada Conference) moved that the Resolution to Ban the Practice of Conversion Therapy, as amended be adopted by the 33<sup>rd</sup> General Synod of the United Church of Christ. Crystal Silva McCormick spoke to the resolution.

Discussion:

Izzy Harbin (Indiana-Kentucky Conference) spoke in support

Tyler Connoley (Conference Minister for the Central Pacific Conference) spoke in support

### **Motion to Call the Question**

Josiah Accola (Illinois South Conference) moved to call the question.

The motion was seconded.

**Vote on Motion to Call the Question**

**21-GS-34 VOTED:**

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 519 Yes: 24 No: 3 Abstain)

**Vote on Main Motion**

**21-GS-35 VOTED:** The Thirty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ voted to adopt the Resolution to Ban the Practice of Conversion Therapy.

MOTION CARRIED (Vote: 547 Yes; 5 No; 1 Abstain)

**A RESOLUTION TO BAN THE PRACTICE OF CONVERSION THERAPY**  
**A Resolution of Witness**

**TEXT OF THE MOTION**

**WHEREAS** the medical practice known as “conversion therapy” or “reparative therapy” regards LGBTQ+1 persons as abnormal or defective, and attempts to change or “repair” non-conforming sexual orientation or gender identity through widely-discredited therapeutic practices; and

**WHEREAS** conversion therapy for adults is legal in 50 states and all U.S. territories, while conversion therapy for youth and children is still legal in 30 states; and **WHEREAS** many studies have shown that attempts to change or “repair” sexual orientation or gender identity are associated with compromised mental health including, among other harms, lifelong suffering as the result of internalized shame, increased risk of suicide, and difficulty in forming stable and lasting relationships; and

**WHEREAS** a survey of at-risk LGBTQ+ youth published by the Trevor Project in 2020 showed that 42 percent who were subjected to conversion therapy had attempted suicide, while the attempted suicide rate of transgender and non-binary youth during or after conversion therapy was even higher at 57 percent; and

**WHEREAS** virtually every professional association in the health care industry has declared that conversion therapy is ineffective, unethical or harmful, including the American Medical Association, the American College of Physicians, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychoanalytic Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Counseling Association, and the National Association of Social Workers; and

**WHEREAS** in December 2020 UCC denominational leaders joined Archbishop Desmond Tutu and more than 400 other Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Sikh and Hindu faith leaders as signatories of the statement “Declaring the Sanctity of life and the Dignity of All” which called “for all attempts to change, suppress or erase a person’s sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression—commonly known as ‘conversion therapy’—to end, and for these harmful practices to be banned”;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that The Thirty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ, affirming the dignity and worth of all people, deplors the practice of “conversion therapy” or “reparative therapy” that denies LGBTQ+ youth, children, and adults the opportunity to experience the blessings of love and human integrity; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The Thirty-Third General Synod strongly urges parents and guardians, caregivers, and authorized ministers in the United Church of Christ to protect those in their care from any practice or program that purports to “cure” their sexual orientation or gender identity; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The Thirty-Third General Synod strongly urges congregations and all other settings of the church to advocate for state and federal laws protecting youth, children, and adults from “conversion therapy” or “reparative therapy” by banning the practice; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Thirty-Third General Synod encourages congregations and other settings of the church to work with ecumenical and interfaith partners to raise awareness of the harms of “conversion therapy” or “reparative therapy” and to advocate for banning the practice; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that The Thirty-Third General Synod strongly urges congregations and other settings to strengthen their efforts to reach their LGBTQ+ neighbors, especially youth and children, with the Good News that their sexual orientation and gender identity or expression are gifts from God.

**FUNDING:** The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

**8. “WHO WILL SPEAK FOR THE TREES?” A RESOLUTION ON THE RIGHTS OF NATURE**

This Resolution was submitted by the New Hampshire Conference. Moderator Lowes called on Michael Vollbrecht (Kansas-Oklahoma Conference) to introduce the resolution Who Will Speak for the Trees?, a Resolution on the Rights of Nature, as amended. Suzanne E. Schwarz-Green (Penn Southeast) moved that the Thirty-third General Synod adopt the Resolution Who Will Speak for the Trees? and recommended its approval as amended. Michael Vollbrecht spoke to the Resolution.

Discussion:

Edwin Perez, Jr. (Southern New England Conference and HUGS delegate) spoke in support  
Alison Buttrick Patton (Southern New England Conference) spoke in support